

Sampson Spadafore  
Portland  
LD 3

We need solutions because this is a crisis. My name is Sampson Spadafore, I'm an activist living on Wabanaki Land known as Portland, Maine. At the end of 2021 and into 2022 I had to request rent assistance because I didn't make enough to afford rent. I'm currently housing an unhoused transgender individual who is on disability income and cannot afford her own place to live. I'm starting to worry because my rent has gone up this past November. I'm trying to house this friend so she doesn't freeze to death this winter. My utilities have gone up twice as high. It's dark by 4:30 so I'm turning on more lights now than I usually am. My heating doesn't keep my apartment warm in the winter, so I'm running a space heater that runs a lot of energy.

I just spoke with another transgender person recently. She's working two jobs and living out of her car. She hasn't been able to find anything affordable or available in the area that she works. I don't know if any of you on the committee have ever had to sleep in your car for any amount of time in the winter, but it's a horrible experience.

There are Mainers all across the state who are currently or going to be subject to living in cars, tents, or the streets and they could absolutely lose their lives if we don't help them now.

There is enough money to meet everyone's basic needs. Public documents show that the State of Maine has many sources of income and funding underutilized. We desperately need to release the \$900 million that sits in the state's Stabilization or "rainy day" funds. We also know that the wealthiest of individuals and businesses in Maine, who are not affected by our housing crisis, are not taxed enough. We should collect more from those we have the ability to pay, and less from those struggling - and most of the people in Maine are struggling in some form. The State of Maine spent \$600 million LESS than it collected for income or revenue.

Like any large business or large organization or person with assets (resources we own), Maine is in a great position to borrow money at low interest rates to fund the types of investments in our communities that we all deserve. The State of Maine is rated well as a responsible borrower, and that will still be true even if we spend some "rainy day" funds and do not run such a high budget "surplus."

Why are we investing so little money for heat and housing with this bill? Why aren't we helping the 75% of Mainers who need it, according to their relative need?

I'm asking that the committee amend this bill to better address these points and help Mainers. Where is our real, bold plan to stop homelessness, to stop relying on the streets and warming centers and shelters? Our people need permanent housing that we can call our own. We want to be partners with you in making these solutions - not the paid lobbyists, not the elite party networks. Look to us for the solutions, because we live in, with, and through these problems everyday.